

Message Text

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EXDIS, TOSEC 183

FOLLOWING REPEAT MEXICO 5501 SENT ACTION SECSTATE DATED
28 JUNE 1974:

QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 5501

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINR MX

SUBJECT: FONSEC RABASA DENIES RESIGNATION RUMORS

REF: MEXICO 5131

1. AS DEPT IS AWARE FROM REFTTEL, FONSEC RABASA ON JUNE 19
TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT PRIMARY PURPOSE OF NOTE ON BRACERO
QUESTION (AND ITS SIMULTANEOUS RELEASE TO PRESS) WAS TO
WARD OF ANTICIPATED PRESS CRITICISM ABOUT HIS ROLE WITH
REGARD TO CHILE AND HIS ALLEGED SUBSERVIENCE TO SECRETARY
KISSINGER. (IN THE EVENT, THE ANTICIPATED ATTACK BY
GASTON GARCIA CANTU DID NOT APPEAR IN EXCELSIOR'S JUNE 21
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EDITION; INSTEAD, HIS COLUMN CONCERNED A TOTALLY UNRELATED

MATTER).

2. SUBSEQUENTLY, WE HEARD DIRECTLY FROM FOREIGN (AND INDIRECTLY FROM MEXICAN) PRESS-CORPS SOURCES THAT RABASA HAS BEEN DISPLAYING UNUSUAL ANXIETY IN HIS RELATIONS WITH MEXICAN REPORTERS, ALLEGEDLY DRINKING MORE THAN USUAL, AND LOOKING PALE AND STRAINED. WE ALSO HAD UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT RUMORS OF RABASA'S INTENT TO RESIGN WERE CIRCULATING AS OF JUNE 25 AND THAT RABASA HAD BEEN FORCED TO DENY THE RUMORS TO INQUIRERS AT A SOCIAL FUNCTION THAT EVENING FOR UNCTAD WORKING GROUP.

3. NOW, SIMILAR REPORTS COUPLED WITH RABASA'S DENIAL HAVE APPEARED IN THE PRESS, ALTHOUGH MOST PAPERS APPEAR TO BE IGNORING THE STORY. EL DIA ON JUNE 27 CARRIES ONE-PARAGRAPH SQUIB ON FRONT-PAGE WHICH SAYS RABASA DENIED RUMORS HE WOULD RESIGN EVEN WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT IN RECENT DAYS THERE HAD BEEN CRITICISM OF HIS PERFORMANCE IN OFFICE. HE IS QUOTED AS SAYING: "I HAVE NOT THOUGHT AND AM NOT THINKING ABOUT RESIGNING. IN ANY CASE, THE PRESIDENT IS THE ONE WHO WOULD HAVE TO ASK FOR MY RESIGNATION, AND HE HAS NOT DONE SO UP TO NOW." RABASA REPORTEDLY CONCLUDED THAT HE WAS SORRY TO HAVE TO DISILLUSION "MY ENEMIES, BECAUSE THERE WILL BE NO RESIGNATION." THIS EXCHANGE WITH PRESS REPORTEDLY TOOK PLACE DURING JUNE 26 FUNCTION AT WHICH RABASA WAS SEATED BESIDE ECHEVERRIA.

4. COMMENT: WE CANNOT AS YET EVALUATE THE SERIOUSNESS OF RABASA'S POSITION. RUMORS THAT ONE OR ANOTHER CABINET MINISTER IS ON HIS WAY OUT DO OF COURSE CIRCULATE FROM TIME TO TIME, BUT THEY SELDOM REACH THE POINT WHERE SUBJECT OF RUMOR CONSIDERS ON-THE-RECORD DENIAL NECESSARY. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY EXPRESSION BY ECHEVERRIA OF DISSATISFACTION WITH RABASA'S PERFORMANCE, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE HEARD THAT OTHER CABINET MEMBERS OPPOSED WHILE IDEA OF HIS MISSION TO CHILE, AND IT IS AT LEAST CONCEIVABLE THAT HE WAS REPRIMANDED BY ECHEVERRIA FOR EXCEEDING HIS INSTRUCTIONS OR GENERATING TOO WARM A CLIMATE TOWARD CHILE (SEE A-306 OF JUNE 26). AT THE VERY LEAST, HOWEVER, RABASA'S PERFORMANCE WITH THE "BRACERO" NOTE AND IN OTHER RECENT

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ENCOUNTERS SUGGESTS THAT HE IS INDEED UNDER STRAIN AND THAT PUBLISHED CRITICISM HAS TAKEN ITS TOLL ON HIS NERVES. THE POSSIBILITY CANNOT BE WHOLLY DISCOUNTED, NEVERTHELESS, THAT, RABASA'S EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER CRITICISM IS IN PART A PRESSURE TACTIC DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN HIS BARGAINING POSITION WITH US. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT HE OPPOSED VISIT BY GOVERNOR OF PUERTO RICO BECAUSE OF ALLEGED VIEWS OF "PROGRESSIVE CIRCLES". THERE ARE SOME

INDICATIONS HE IS USING A SIMILAR PLEA TO DRAG HIS FEET
ON RECEIVING A NEW CHILEAN AMBASSADOR. HE HAS EVEN
(THROUGH GALLASTEGUI) CITED HIS NEED FOR "SOME LITTLE
VICTORY" WITH REFERENCE TO CURRENT TALKS ON DISPOSITION
OF THE AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION CEMETERY IN
MEXICO CITY. JOVA UNQTE SISCO

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